

HIGHLANDS MIDDLE SCHOOL CHORAL PROGRAM

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# Information for Students and Parents

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**Highlands Middle School**

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# Welcome to another great year with the Highlands Middle School Chorus!

Whether you are new to our program or a returning member, please review this information for the upcoming year. This packet contains important concert information, grading policies, and explanation of student expectations and responsibilities. **If you have any questions about this information, please contact Mrs. Ludwig as soon as possible.**

## Student Expectations and Responsibilities

All Highlands students are expected to be **Respectful, Accountable, Motivated, and Safe**. Make the most of your choral music education by practicing the following RAMS behaviors:

### RESPECTFUL

- BE NICE!!! Work together and help each other. (Yes, it really IS that simple!)
- Understand and value what choral music is and what it is meant to teach you. Choral music has a set of standards, practices, and traditions that are unique to this type of ensemble.
- Recognize that there are different levels of respect; some types of respect are given, and other types are earned. You are respected as an individual and as a student in this program, but to be respected as a musician requires exemplary behavior and diligent practice.

### ACCOUNTABLE

- Use materials and equipment properly. Help keep our room organized by putting your folder away carefully.
- Attend all rehearsals and performances. If you are not here, our performance is not the same. If you absolutely cannot attend a performance, show responsibility by submitting an excuse to the director.
- Give your best attitude and effort at all times. If you are having a bad day, do not allow your attitude or actions to prevent the chorus from having a productive rehearsal or a good performance.

### MOTIVATED

- Follow along in your music! Musicians become more literate by practicing music-reading skills.
- Set high performance goals for yourself, and strive to reach them each day. As you improve, continue to challenge yourself by setting higher goals.
- Take pride in your performance. Our performance is a reflection of your time, your talents, and your energy – make it the best performance it can be!

### SAFE

- Follow classroom and stage procedures and behavioral expectations.
- Learn to sing with correct posture and vocal technique, and take care of your voice outside of class time. Avoid unnecessary vocal strain!
- Create an environment of acceptance in our program. We are different in many ways, but we all deserve to feel safe and accepted here.

## Technology in the Classroom

At the Middle School, we use Smart Music software in the classroom to develop music-reading skills and to assess accuracy of individual performances. A student subscription is available if you are interested in using this at home. Please contact Mrs. Ludwig if you have questions or would like more information.

We also use Google Classroom and other apps for classroom assessments and to provide resources to students for home practice. Students will access these assessments and resources using their district-managed Google account if a login is required.

## Grades and Assessments

Chorus is a graded and credited course at the Middle School. In an ensemble, grades are a reflection of your developing skills as an individual musician and of your contributions to the ensemble's growth and performance.

### WHAT'S IN A GRADE?

Although grade components do vary each nine weeks according to our specific learning objectives, grades are based primarily on:

- **Rehearsal Skills** rubric assessment (weekly, if applicable): ongoing evaluation of active and appropriate participation in rehearsal
- **Ensemble Skills** rubric assessment (end of nine weeks): evaluation of individual skills related to ensemble singing
- **Music Literacy** assignments (periodically, varies by nine weeks): written assignments to assess music-reading skills
- **Singing Assessment** (periodically, varies by grade level): individual assessment of vocal performance of a specific exercise, skill, or piece of music
- **Application of Concepts and Skills** (periodically, varies by nine weeks): other assignments that require students to apply specific knowledge to a question or project
- **Dress Rehearsal** (prior to a concert): attendance and satisfactory participation in a scheduled rehearsal outside of scheduled class time in preparation for the evening concert (or credit for an excuse submitted for absence from rehearsal)
- **Concert** or other **Community/School Performance** (two evening concerts per year; other performances by invitation): attendance and satisfactory participation in a scheduled concert or performance (or credit for an excuse submitted for absence from a concert or performance)
- **Extra Credit** (varies by nine weeks): additional voluntary performances or assignments

**Please note:** The Winter and Spring Choral Concerts are the culmination of a semester's work and are extremely important to realizing the product of choral music education. For this reason, **every** student should make **every** effort to attend! Because the concert is such an important musical experience, approximately 20% of the nine-weeks grade is based on concert attendance and performance. **Students who miss the Winter or Spring Concert will be required to make up the concert grade by performing a portion of their concert music in a small group for an audience of their peers.**

**Grading of Absences:** If you are unable to attend or participate in a scheduled dress rehearsal or performance, you **MUST** submit an excuse signed by your parent or guardian that states the reason for absence or inability to participate. (An email from a parent or guardian is an acceptable format of a "signed" excuse.) All excuses must be received by the end of the affected nine-weeks grading period. **Please note: excuses submitted to homeroom teachers for school attendance purposes are filed separately and are NOT forwarded to the choral director. You must submit an excuse to the choral director for the rehearsal or performance itself, even if you were absent from school that day.**

For grading purposes, unfulfilled performance requirements due to **personal illness** or **family emergency** will be defined as excused absences and receive 90% credit. Absences for other reasons will receive 50% credit for the requirement if an excuse is submitted. The remaining percentage of the grade can be made up with an alternate assignment, just like you would make up work for any other class. **If no excuse is received, the student will receive no credit for the rehearsal or performance.** Although there may be other reasonable explanations for missing a rehearsal or concert (not defined here as "excused"), we must be fair to all students by following a clear and consistent grading policy. (Remember, you can always complete extra credit assignments to make up any points you have missed!)

## **Dress Rehearsal and Concert Information**

Prior to each concert, we will have at least one rehearsal with all grade levels to rehearse staging, transitions, and combined songs. Because our classes are scheduled by grade level, these combined rehearsals must take place outside of our regularly scheduled class time. Every effort is made to keep these extra rehearsals to a minimum and to use our time efficiently.

Dress rehearsals will be held during the school day and will allow us to completely rehearse the concert selections and staging as well as coordinate the lighting and sound for our public performance. Students DO NOT need to wear concert attire for these rehearsals. You will be notified of the date and time of the dress rehearsal(s) approximately one week prior to the rehearsal. These rehearsals are mandatory and will factor into the student's grade for the nine-week grading period.

The Highlands Middle School Chorus regularly presents two concerts during the school year – a Winter Concert in December and a Spring Concert in May. This year's concert dates are as follows:

Mark your calendars! Tell your friends and family!

***5th and 6th Grade Winter Choral Concert: Wednesday, December 11, 2019***

Call Time (warm-ups begin): 6:15 p.m.

**Performance Time: 7:00 p.m. (HMS Auditorium)**

*No admission charge*

***7th and 8th Grade Winter Choral Concert: Thursday, December 12, 2019***

Call Time (warm-ups begin): 6:15 p.m.

**Performance Time: 7:00 p.m. (HMS Auditorium)**

*No admission charge*

***5th and 6th Grade Spring Choral Concert: Wednesday, May 13, 2020***

Call Time (warm-ups begin): 6:15 p.m.

**Performance Time: 7:00 p.m. (HMS Auditorium)**

*No admission charge*

***7th and 8th Grade Spring Choral Concert: Thursday, May 14, 2020***

Call Time (warm-ups begin): 6:15 p.m.

**Performance Time: 7:00 p.m. (HMS Auditorium)**

*No admission charge*

On the evening of the concert, students will report to the Chorus room (or assigned backstage area) prior to concert time for warming up and lining up. This allows us to focus on the performance ahead and to present the best possible concert to our audience. Parents are welcome to arrive early or drop your child students off at the call time and return to the school for the start of the concert.

## Concert Attire

Choirs of all ages typically dress uniformly for formal performances, and concert dress varies according to choir type and level. At the Middle School level, we dress in black and white for our formal evening concerts. This communicates to the students and to our audience the value we place on our work. The concert dress for the Highlands Middle School Chorus and Show Choir is as follows:

### Chorus Concert Attire (for evening concerts):

**BOYS:** black dress pants, white shirt (preferably a collared, button-down shirt), dark shoes, neck tie

**GIRLS:** black skirt (fingertip length) or dress pants (no leggings), white dress shirt (no t-shirts), black dress shoes

**ALL:** Please wear lightweight, breathable clothing and avoid using large amounts of perfume, cologne, or hairspray.

\*\*\*If you are experiencing financial hardship and cannot provide your child with the concert attire specified, please contact Mrs. Ludwig before Thanksgiving break (for the December concert) or before the end of April (for the May concert). Assistance may be available to you through donations of cash or clothing. Also, if you would like to donate secondhand clothing (in good condition) or cash to purchase concert attire for students in need, please send these items to Mrs. Ludwig.

## Stay Informed!

*Would you like to have quick reminders sent to your phone or email? Check out the **Remind** app or [Remind.com](https://Remind.com)! Subscribe to the reminders you need: Chorus, Show Choir, or Musical. Parents AND students can utilize this app, but students under age 13 will be required to provide their parent's email address as well.*

*All information that is sent home with students will also be posted on the Chorus page at [www.goldenrams.com/middleschoolmusic](http://www.goldenrams.com/middleschoolmusic).*